

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MEXICO 11135 01 OF 02 060100Z

ACTION ARA-06

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MEXICO 11135

LIMDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CVIS, MX, US

SUBJECT: CONSULTATIONS WITH GOM ON UNDOCUMENTED ALIENS

1. SUMMARY: AS IMPLICATIONS OF PLANNED U.S. POLICY PROPOSALS ON UNDOCUMENTED ALIENS REGISTERED DURING COURSE JULY 1 CONSULTATIONS AT MEXICAN FOREIGN SECRETARIAT, SECRETARY ROEL AND HIS COLLEAGUES EXPRESSED NEGATIVE VIEWS, POINTING OUT THAT CONTEMPLATED U.S. ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS WOULD GENERATE POLITICAL PRESSURES IN MEXICO THAT WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT NEW AND FAVORABLE ATMOSPHERE THAT HAS BEEN EVOLVING IN RECENT MONTHS UNDER NEW ADMINISTRATION. END SUMMARY.

2. ON JULY 1 U.S. DELEGATION MET AT FOREIGN SECRETARIAT WITH SECRETARY ROEL, LABOR SECRETARY OJEDA, FOREIGN UNDER-SECRETARY ROSENZWEIG-DIAZ, AMBASSADOR MANUEL BARTLETT, AND MARCOS MANUEL SUAREZ, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER OF LABOR SECRETARIAT, TO CONSULT ON POLICY PROPOSALS ON UNDOCUMENTED ALIENS AS THEY PRESENTLY STAND. U.S. SIDE EMPHASIZED TENTATIVE NATURE OF CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF POLICY, AND ALSO CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MEXICO 11135 01 OF 02 060100Z

STRESSED THAT U.S. SIDE WAS STRONGLY INTERESTED IN LEARNING MEXICAN VIEWS AND REACTIONS, BOTH AT MEETING AND IN NEAR FUTURE, WHEN MEXICAN SIDE HAS HAD OPPORTUNITY TO CONSIDER PRESENTATION.

3. LEGAL ADVISER HANSELL INTRODUCED DISCUSSION, MS. GUTIERREZ DISCUSSED INTERNAL U.S. ENFORCEMENT PROGRAMS, INS

COMMISSIONER CASTILLO OUTLINED BORDER ENFORCEMENT PROGRAMS, MR. HANSELL DISCUSSED ADJUSTMENT OF STATUS OF UNDOCUMENTED ALIENS, MR. DEWITT OUTLINED PLANNED CHANGES IN IMMIGRATION POLICY, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY LUERS DISCUSSED U.S. RECOGNITION OF UNDERLYING ECONOMIC CAUSES OF PROBLEM, AND COUNSELOR NIMETZ PLACED UNDOCUMENTED-ALIENS QUESTION IN FRAMEWORK OF THE WORKING GROUPS SET UP AS PART OF THE CONSULTATIVE MECHANISM.

4. INITIAL RESPONSE BY ROEL WAS ONE OF COURTEOUS THANKS FOR PRESENTATION, WHICH ROEL EMPHASIZED SHOWED GOOD WILL AND RESPONDED TO MEXICAN DESIRE FOR ADVANCE CONSULTATION. FOLLOWING RECESS DURING WHICH MEXICAN SIDE CAUCUSED, OJEDA MADE FORMAL RESPONSE, FOLLOWED BY ROSENZWEIG-DIAZ, BARTLETT, SEVERAL COMMENTARIES BY ROEL, AND CLARIFICATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS BY MEMBERS OF U.S. TEAM. THEME OF MEXICAN RESPONSE CENTERED ON LOPEZ PORTILLO'S REPEATED STATEMENTS THAT PROBLEM OF WORKERS IS ECONOMIC, WITH VERY COMPLEX ROOTS AND ASPECTS THAT ARE NOT FULLY UNDERSTOOD AS YET AND THAT REQUIRE STUDY AND CONSIDERATION, AND THAT IT IS NOT A POLICY PROBLEM (MEXICO 10881). ROEL INTRODUCED TWO NEW VIEWS RELATED TO PROBLEM: HE EMPHASIZED "BAD PRESS" THAT MEXICO RECEIVES IN U.S. ON MANY OCCASIONS, CITING U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT ARTICLES IN JUNE 27 AND ESPECIALLY JULY 4 ISSUES, AND URGED BOTH GOVERNMENTS ADDRESS PRESS PROBLEM IN WAYS THAT WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH PRESS FREEDOM. NIMETZ SUGGESTED BACKGROUND BRIEFINGS FOR PRESS CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MEXICO 11135 01 OF 02 060100Z

BY U.S. OFFICIALS, AND ALSO SAID GOM MIGHT CONSIDER BACKGROUND SESSIONS WITH U.S. NEWSMEN. ROEL ALSO NOTED THAT, SINCE U.S. EXECUTIVE IS NOW CONSULTING WITH CONGRESS ON THE ELEMENTS OF NEW POLICY, IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR MEXICAN AND U.S. CONGRESSMEN, WHO HAVE CLOSE CONTACTS WITH ONE ANOTHER THROUGH THE INTERPARLIAMENTARY GROUP (WHICH MET MOST RECENTLY IN MAY AT HERMOSILLO), TO HAVE A SPECIAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON HOW TO APPROACH UNDOCUMENTED-WORKERS QUESTION.

5. FORMAL RESPONSES OF MEXICAN DELEGATION FOLLOWING PRESENTATION WERE RELATIVELY BLAND, ALTHOUGH THEY CONTAINED A FEW INDICATIONS OF DISSATISFACTION. OJEDA, FOR EXAMPLE, NOTED THAT HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH SECRETARY OF LABOR MARSHALL IN GUADALAJARA HAD BEEN GENERAL IN NATURE AND HAD NOT COVERED SPECIFICALLY THE ELEMENTS OF THE PROJECTED ACTION PROGRAM JUST DESCRIBED. OJEDA WAS, HOWEVER, VERY UPBEAT ABOUT HIS TALKS WITH MARSHALL AND HIS DESIRE TO CONTINUE THE DIALOGUE.

6. AS MESSAGE SANK IN DURING LUNCHEON AND BALANCE OF DELEGATIONS' TIME AT FOREIGN MINISTRY, DEEPER FEELINGS OF

WORRY BEGAN TO SURFACE AND EXPRESSION OF NEGATIVE VIEWS BECAME FRANKER. MOST EXPLICIT STATEMENT OF VIEWS CAME IN CHARGE'S SIDE CONVERSATION WITH ROSENZWEIG-DIAZ AND BARTLETT AND IN COURSE OF SECRETARY ROEL'S DISCUSSION WITH LEGAL ADVISER HANSELL AND CHARGE THOMPSON ON ILLICIT PAYMENTS (REPORTED SEPTEL).

7. ROSENZWEIG-DIAZ AND BARTLETT TOOK THE LINE THAT U.S. ENFORCEMENT MEASURES ARE INAPPROPRIATE TO THE PROBLEM AND INEVITABLY WILL CREATE SEVERE PROBLEMS IN AND WITH MEXICO. AS U.S. ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS BEGIN TO BITE, THEY WILL GENERATE SERIOUS POLITICAL PRESSURES IN MEXICO. MEASURES WILL BE PERCEIVED IN MEXICO AS INCONSISTENT WITH NEW

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 MEXICO 11135 02 OF 02 060108Z
ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCA-01 SS-14 SSO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 MEXICO 11135

LIMDIS

ATMOSPHERE EVOLVING IN U.S.-MEXICAN RELATIONS SINCE ADVENT OF CARTER AND LOPEZ PORTILLO ADMINISTRATIONS. POLITICAL PRESSURES IN MEXICO WILL OBLIGE PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO TO RESPOND TO U.S. ACTIONS. IN SHORT, USG WILL BE EMBARKING UPON A COURSE WHICH WILL UNDERMINE BOTH THE RECENT IMPROVEMENT IN U.S.-MEXICAN RELATIONS AND THE BILATERAL CONSULTATIVE PROCESS NOW BEGINNING WHICH OFFERS, FOR THE FIRST TIME, HOPE THAT THE TWO GOVERNMENTS TOGETHER CAN SEEK GENUINE SOLUTIONS TO THIS PROBLEM.

8. SECRETARY ROEL'S THESIS WAS THAT ENFORCEMENT ASPECTS OF U.S. POLICY AS DESCRIBED WOULD HAVE SEVERE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL EFFECTS IN MEXICO. POLITICAL DAMAGE COULD RESULT THAT WOULD AFFECT THE LOPEZ PORTILLO ADMINISTRATION AND THE PRESIDENT PERSONALLY. HE APPEARED PARTICULARLY CONCERNED THAT, WITHIN A FAIRLY SHORT TIME,

PRESIDENT CARTER, RESPONSIVE TO DOMESTIC POLITICAL PRESURES, WOULD DESCRIBE ELEMENTS OF HIS PROGRAM IN A COMMUNICATION TO CONGRESS. ROEL SEEMED TO THINK THE PRESIDENT WOULD BE ADDRESSING CONGRESS, RATHER THAN SENDING A MESSAGE. HE SAID THAT THE U.S. SIDE, JUDGING FROM THE U.S. GROUP'S PRESENTATION, IS STILL LOOKING AT THE UNDOCUMENTED-WORKERS PROBLEM AS ONE OF ENFORCEMENT, WHEREAS MEXICANS, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MEXICO 11135 02 OF 02 060108Z

FROM LOPEZ PORTILLO ON DOWN, VIEWED WORKERS AS ONE ASPECT OF THE UNIFIED WHOLE OF MEXICAN-U.S. BILATERAL ISSUES, AND IN RELATION TO THE PROBLEM OF MEXICAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

9. RETURNING TO THEME THAT PRESIDENT CARTER MUST TAKE CERTAIN ACTIONS FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL REASONS, ROEL STRESSED THAT MEXICO ALSO HAD POLITICAL PROBLEMS. IF IT APPEARED MEXICO WAS "HAVING ITS TOES STEPPED ON" ON THE WORKERS PROBLEM, IT WOULD HAVE TO RESPOND BY DOING SOME TOE-STEPPING IN RETURN, WHICH COULD AFFECT THE PRESENT POSITIVE COURSE OF OUR RELATIONS. ROEL'S FUNDAMENTAL POSITION CAME IN A SERIES OF SHORT SENTENCES AS FOLLOWS: HERE WE ARE IN A BEAUTIFUL RELATIONSHIP. LET'S NOT DESTROY IT. LET US NOT CLOSE DOORS ON ONE ANOTHER. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT A "GRAND DISILLUSION" NOT SET IN ON EITHER SIDE. AT CONCLUSION, IN RESPONSE TO HANSELL'S QUESTION WHETHER GOM WOULD BE SENDING FORMAL EXPRESSION OF VIEWS DURING WEEK OF JULY 3, ROEL WAFFLED BY SAYING THAT GOM WOULD LIKE TO SEE STATEMENT IN DRAFT THAT PRESIDENT CARTER PROPOSED TO MAKE TO CONGRESS AND WOULD GIVE ITS VIEWS ON THE STATEMENT. ALTERNATIVELY, HE SAID GOM COULD RESPOND TO A WRITTEN REQUEST FOR VIEWS, WHETHER IN FORM OF LETTER OR NOTE FROM EMBASSY. THUS, HE LEFT OPEN AT END OF CONVERSATION WHETHER GOM WOULD IN FACT BE PROVIDING COMMENTS IN TIME PERIOD REQUESTED.

10. IN BRIEF CONVERSATION AT CHARGE'S INDEPENDENCE DAY RECEPTION, UNDER SECRETARY ROSENZWEIG-DIAZ SUGGESTED THAT GOM MIGHT PROVIDE PROMPT REACTION TO DELEGATION'S PRESENTATION. CHARGE ENCOURAGED HIM TO MAKE CONSIDERED GOM VIEWS KNOWN TO USG SOONEST.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 MEXICO 11135 02 OF 02 060108Z

11. COMMENT: GOM IS PLAINLY APPRECIATIVE OF AND GRATIFIED WITH PRESIDENT CARTER'S FRIENDLY AND CONSIDERATE

GESTURE OF SENDING A HIGH-LEVEL DELEGATION TO CONSULT ON THIS SENSITIVE SUBJECT. AT THE SAME TIME, FONSEC AND TOP STAFF ARE GENUINELY WORRIED AT POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR RECENTLY IMPROVED BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP AND PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE PROGRESS INHERENT IN POLITICAL FALLOUT IN MEXICO FROM U.S. ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS. DILEMMA CONFRONTING BOTH GOVERNMENTS IS THAT WHILE OUR LONGER-TERM INTERESTS WITH REGARD TO UNDOCUMENTED-ALIEN PROBLEM COINCIDE, OUR SHORT-TERM INTERESTS ARE IN CONFLICT: WHILE USG FEELS CONSTRAINED NOW TO REDUCE BOTH FLOW OF ILLEGALS FROM MEXICO TO U.S. AND TOTAL NUMBER OF MEXICAN ILLEGALS IN U.S., GOM PERCEIVES POLITICAL NEED FOR SAFETY-VALVE OF ILLEGAL MEXICAN IMMIGRATION TO U.S. AND SERIOUS ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF ANY REVERSE FLOW. THOMPSON

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